

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. Claims 1-12, and 14-21 were previously pending in this application. Claim 19 has been canceled and claims 1, 4, and 7 have been amended. No new claims have been added. As a result, claims 1-12, 14-18, 20, and 21 are pending for examination with claims 1, 4, and 7 being independent claims. No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 4-8, 10-12, 14, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Quant (U.S. Patent No. 2,221,926).

Independent claim 4 has been amended to further the prosecution of this application. In particular, as amended, independent claim 4 further recites that the *holder is constructed such that the award bar may be removed from the holder without substantial additional deflection of the pressure member.*

Quant is directed to a device that holds various types of characters. The device includes a channel-shaped holder 10 having a flat base 11 with flanges 12. Rigidly connected to the holder 10 is a locking plate 14 with an upset flange 15 at one end, and a plurality of upwardly extending spring locking fingers 16 all inclined towards the flange 15. Characters 17 slide into the channel through the end opposite the flange 15 and the back of the characters 17 have slots 19. When the characters 17 slide into the channel, the locking fingers 16 lock the characters into the holder. To remove the characters from the holder, a release bar 20 is inserted into the slot 19 which depresses the locking fingers 16 out of engagement with the characters 17 such that the characters may be slid out of the holder back through the end they were originally inserted.

Quant does not include a holder that is constructed such that the award bar may be removed from the holder *without substantial additional deflection of said pressure member*, as recited in amended claim 4. As mentioned above, Quant discloses that to remove a character from the holder, the release bar must first depress the locking fingers 16. As shown in FIGS. 4-5 of Quant, the release bar deflects the locking fingers 16 to a substantially flat position. Thus, claim 4 patentably distinguishes over Quant, such that the rejection under §102 should be withdrawn.

Claims 5, 6, and 16 depend from claim 4 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

As amended, independent claim 7 has also been amended to further the prosecution of this application. In particular, as amended, independent claim 7 further recites that the *holder is open at both ends such that the award bar may slide into the holder from either end*.

Quant does not include a holder that is open at both ends, as recited in amended claim 7. The holder in Quant has an upset flange 15 at one end, which prevents characters from being inserted or removed from this end. Therefore the device in Quant only permits a character to slide into the holder from one end. Thus, claim 7 patentably distinguishes over Quant, such that the rejection under §102 should be withdrawn.

Claims 8 and 10-12, 14 and 17 depend from claim 7 and are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Quant in view of Harn (U.S. Patent No. 3,192,655) or Elkies (U.S. Patent No. 2,495,577), and also over Quant in view of Bowder (U.S. Patent No. 2,550,763) in view of Harn or Elkies.

Without acceding to the propriety of the reference combination nor the rejection grounded thereon, claim 9 depends from independent claim 7 and is patentable for at least the same reasons set forth above. Accordingly, the rejections of this claim should be withdrawn.

Claims 4-8, 10-12, 14, 16-18 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Quant in view of Bowder.

Quant is discussed above.

Bowder discloses an identification assembly unit with characters 30 that slide into portions of the assembly. The assembly includes a frame or body member 15, and a carrier 16 that holds the characters and which slides into the body member 15. The body member 15 includes a sidewall 21 which extends around the sides of the body member except at end 22 which is open to allow the carrier 16 to slide into the body member 15. A spring 28 rests on top of the bottom wall 25 of the carrier 16 and has a natural contour bulging upwardly. The spring

28 may be forced downwardly by the pressure of characters placed in the carrier. As shown in FIG. 4 of Bowder, to slide the carrier 16 with characters 30 into the body member 15, the spring 28 is completely depressed down to the bottom wall 25 of the body member.

Setting aside the issue of whether there is motivation for the reference combination, Applicant has amended claim 4 in a manner to further distinguish over both Quant and Bowder. In particular, amended claim 4 has been amended to further recite that the *holder is constructed such that the award bar may be removed from the holder without substantial additional deflection of said pressure member*. Neither Quant or Bowder, taken alone or together, teach or suggest a holder where an award bar is removed without substantial deflection of the pressure member. As mentioned above, Quant teaches that the release bar must fully depress the locking fingers to remove characters from the holder. Furthermore, Bowder discloses that the spring 28 is depressed down to the bottom wall 25 when the carrier with characters is either inserted into or removed from the body member.

Accordingly, the rejections of claim 4 should be withdrawn. Claims 5, 6, 16, and 21 depend from claim 4, and the rejections thereof should be withdrawn as well.

Applicant also amended independent claim 7 to further distinguish over both Quant and Bowder. As amended, independent claim 7 further recites that the *holder is open at both ends such that the award bar may slide into the holder from either end*. Neither Quant or Bowder, taken alone or together, teach or suggest a holder that is open at both ends such that an award bar may slide into the holder from either end. The holder in Quant has a locking plate 14 rigidly connected to it, and the locking plate includes an upset flange 15 at one end which closes off that end of the holder. Quant discloses that characters are both inserted into or removed from the holder through the end opposite the flange 15. Also, as mentioned above, Bowder discloses a drawer-like arrangement where the body member 15 has a sidewall 21 that extends around the body member except at one end 22. The carrier 16 is analogous to a drawer as it slides into the body member 15 through the one open end 22, and therefore, characters only slide into the body member 15 through end 22.

Accordingly, the rejections of claim 7 should be withdrawn. Claims 8 and 10-12, 14, 17, 18 and 21 depend from claim 7, and the rejections thereof should be withdrawn as well.

Claims 1-3, 15, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Quant in view of Bowder and Harn or Elkies.

Quant and Bowder are discussed above. Harn and Elkies both disclose an attachment member in the form of a pin and clasp.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to further the prosecution of this application. In particular, dependent claim 19 has been incorporated into claim 1. Accordingly, amended claim 1 further recites that *the middle section of the pressure member is substantially parallel to the back panel before an award bar is disposed in the slide seat.*

In the Office Action, the Examiner recognizes that Quant in view of Bowder does not disclose making the middle section parallel to the back section before an award bar is placed within the holder. However, the Examiner states that this would have been an obvious matter of design choice. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Office Action refers to FIG. 2 of Bowder which shows the spring 28 depressed by the characters 30 inside of the assembly such that portions of the spring 28 appear flattened. However, as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, when the carrier 16 slides out of the body member 15, the spring 28 resumes its upwardly bulging contour. As discussed above, in Bowder, the characters 30 are loaded into the carrier 16 placed on top of the spring 28. Then, similar to a drawer sliding into a desk, the carrier 16 with characters 30 slides into the body member 15. In Bowder, the spring 28 rests on the carrier 16. Therefore, in Bowder, there is never sliding contact between the characters 30 and the spring 28.

This is in sharp contrast to Applicant's invention where there is sliding movement between the award bar and the pressure member as the award bar is either being inserted into or removed from the holder. This is shown in FIGS. 4 and 5 of the application which illustrates two cross-sectional views of the holder with an award bar. As set forth in amended claim 1, one advantageous feature of the present invention is a pressure member where the middle section is substantially parallel to the back panel before an award bar is disposed in the slide seat. This is an advantageous feature, and not merely design choice because it helps to reduce shear forces. In particular, when the middle section of the pressure member is substantially parallel to the back panel, an award bar will slide more easily on the pressure member without causing damage.

There does not appear to be any appreciation in Bowder of the importance of having the characters slide more easily with respect to the pressure member, because in Bowder the characters do not ever slide with respect to the spring. Accordingly, it would not have been obvious as a matter of design choice to modify the device in Quant to include a pressure member as shown in Bowder where the pressure member includes a middle section which is substantially parallel to the back panel before an award bar is disposed in the slide seat, as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, the rejections of claim 1 should be withdrawn. Claims 2-3, 15, 19 and 20 and 17 depend from claim 1, and the rejections thereof should be withdrawn as well.

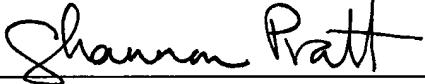
CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

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